

# TRANSEND

A newsletter for employees, retirees and stakeholders of the Arizona Department of Transportation

June 2006

## INSIDE

Get to know  
**Ana Olivares** 4

Project to open soon  
**59th & Grand** 5

Receives safety award  
**R. Henry honored** 6

PTD  
**Light rail safety** 9

Editor's note . . .  
Check out STATS,  
the new safety column  
on page 8

## ADOT joins in 50-year celebration of Interstate System

Cover story on Page 3

*Artist's rendition of how the  
elevated freeway over Phoenix  
might look in the 'future.'  
Circa 1960*

*The elevated freeway today*  
Photo by Dave McDarby



Victor Mendez  
Director

## A year-round responsibility Cultivating a culture of safety

**A**s a multi-modal transportation agency, we frequently speak about safety – often in the context of highway safety: ‘slow down in construction zones, wear your seat belt, drive the speed limit, stop on red, don’t drink and drive.’ We know what we preach about highway safety, but we cannot stress too much the importance of developing an attitude of safety on the job.

June is National Safety Month, a time to focus our attention on the value of creating a safe environment, not only on the highways, in our homes, schools and recreation, but in our work environment as well.

The foundation of a safety culture places safety as a priority. At ADOT we are building on this foundation through the development of programs that encourage everyone to practice safety in everything they do. We have been able to measure our successes with a reduction in lost-work days and increased employee participation in preventive activities. A good example of this success is in the use of compliant personal protective equipment and through the ADOT online safety clothing and equipment catalog.

Training is also an important part of a safety culture. It enables employees to make the right choices about proper safety protection and safe job performance. Our safety classes cover a wide

range of safety best practices such as ergonomics, proper use of personal protective equipment, and safe handling of hazardous materials.

A safety culture depends upon and begins with our leadership. The Safety & Health Office implemented a program in 2000 called START (Supervisors Training in Accident Reduction Techniques.) Facilitated by our staff of safety professionals, START is an eight-hour course that equips managers and supervisors with the skills they need to establish a safety culture in their work areas by following safety policies and procedures, establishing responsibility and accountability, developing safety plans and activities, and measuring successes. This class qualifies supervisors to teach START to their employees, focusing on techniques that each employee should use to prevent incidents.

Building a safety culture takes time. While we have made great strides in reducing lost-work days, we have a lot of opportunities for improvement. All incidents are caused by either unsafe acts or unsafe conditions. They must be reported, investigated, reviewed and corrected to prevent recurrence. Participation by everyone in our agency can help us achieve our safety objectives.

By the numbers, ADOT had a 4.79 percent injury incident rate in 2005. That means that less than five percent of our employees were injured on the job last year. Of those injuries, only 1.28 percent resulted in lost time. Given the high risks associated with the nature of our business, those are impressive numbers! I applaud everyone for maintaining such low statistics by placing a high value on safe working conditions. I also thank our staff in the Safety and Health Section for the quality of work they do to educate, monitor and ensure a safe work environment.

*Victor M. Mendez*  
Director



TRANSEND is published monthly by the Creative Services Group of the Communication and Community Partnerships Division for the employees and retirees of the Arizona Department of Transportation.

**Victor M. Mendez**  
ADOT Director

**Shannon Wilhelmsen**  
CCP Director

**Dan Dudzik**  
Creative Services Group Director

**Ronald Loar**  
Editor

### Editorial Board

**Matt Burdick**  
Communication and Community Partnerships

**Matt Carpenter**  
Public Transportation Division

**Diane E. D'Angelo**  
Intermodal Transportation Division

**Cydney DeModica**  
Motor Vehicle Division

**Kim Stevens**  
Aeronautics Division

**Lynn Sugiyama**  
Transportation Planning Division

**Rob Waddell**  
Transportation Services Group

James Cullison  
Dave McDarby  
PK McMahon  
John Walradt

Address comments, suggestions, articles and photo submissions to TRANSEND Editors  
206 S. 17th Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85007 or e-mail  
Transendeditors@azdot.gov



ADOT joins caravan to celebrate

# Interstate System is 50 years old

By Ron Loar  
Editor

**Everybody loves a birthday party! And the more candles on the cake, the better!**

This month marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the launching of the Interstate Highway System, and the Arizona Department of Transportation is hopping on the bandwagon with celebratory events in Tucson and Phoenix.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) is spearheading a 14-day cross-country convoy that will leave from San Francisco, California, and arrive in Washington, D.C. on June 29, the anniversary of the day that federal legislation was approved to begin work on the 46,508-mile web of highways across the United States.

“ADOT is sending a vehicle to join the convoy as it moves across Interstate 80 through Utah

and Wyoming, and then along I-25 in Colorado June 19-21,” says Doug Nintzel, ADOT spokesperson. “Luncheons will be held in Tucson on June 14 and in Phoenix on June 15 to call attention to the development of the Interstate Highway System in Arizona as it fits into the overall national transportation picture.”

ADOT Director Victor Mendez and Globe District Engineer Rick Powers, a historian of the Interstate highways in Arizona, will speak at the luncheons, sponsored by the American Council of Engineering Companies of Arizona and the state chapter of Associated General Contractors.


Six Interstate routes transect Arizona for a total of 1,168 miles of scenic superhighways. “The Interstate system through Arizona has some of the most modern and architecturally attractive freeways in the United States,” Nintzel says.

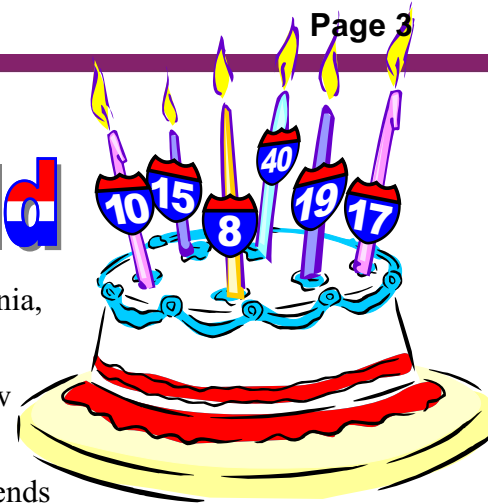
Two of the nation’s longest and busiest Interstate routes pass through Arizona: I-40 from Barstow, California, to Wilmington, North Carolina, for a total 2,555 miles; and I-10, from Los Angeles, California, to Jacksonville, Florida, for a total of 2,460 miles. Both major arteries cross the entire state of Arizona. I-40 extends a total of 359 miles from

Needles, California, passing through Flagstaff before reaching the New Mexico border near Lupton.

Interstate 10 extends for 391 miles across Arizona from Ehrenberg on the California border, through Phoenix and Tucson, then on to the New Mexico border, just east of San Simon.

Other Interstate routes in Arizona include 146 miles of I-17 from Phoenix to Flagstaff and 177 miles of I-8 from Yuma to where it hooks up with I-10 just southeast of Casa Grande. I-19 extends for 64 miles from the Mexico border at Nogales, north to Tucson, and 29 miles of I-15 crosses the northwest border of Arizona from Nevada to Utah near Littlefield.

In the past 50 years, the Interstate Highway System has paved the way for safer, more economical travel that has brought about community growth, improved commerce and lifestyles, and redefined the relationship between urban and rural America. As freeways have lengthened and widened, we can only ask where the next 50 years of Interstate highway expansion will take us. One thing is certain - we can anticipate additional improvements to accommodate more traffic. 



*Artist's model of the proposed Papago Freeway circa 1960. The modern freeway design touted sculptured, elevated columns.*

Get to know

## Ana Olivares – assistant district engineer, Tucson

**T**here's more to being an assistant district engineer than overseeing the design and construction of highways and bridges. Just ask Ana Olivares of the Tucson District, who is known for her good nature, laughter and fairness on the job. Her peers know her as the 'goodwill ambassador of the office.'

"She comes to work in a positive, upbeat mood and takes time to greet and talk with employees," says Rose Vega-Chalabe of the Santa Rita Construction Field Office in Tucson. "It has been a real privilege working with Ana. I appreciate the opportunity to establish a friendship with a supervisor. We always know when she is in the office, we can hear her laughing."

Other employees have commented that Olivares is a strong leader who gives direction in a non-threatening way.

Of herself Ana says, "One of the things that people find interesting about me is that I come from a very traditional Mexican family, yet I work and am successful in a very non-traditional environment for a Mexican woman."


In 1974, as a young child, Ana emigrated from Sonora, Mexico, to the United States with her parents, three brothers and two sisters. She became a U.S. citizen in 1997. While attending Cholla High School in Tucson, Ana was active in 4-H and earned a 4-H scholarship to the

University of Arizona, where she earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering.

In December 1991, Olivares completed the 18-month Engineer in Training (EIT) program with ADOT and was immediately hired as a project supervisor. Two months later, she took on the job of traffic engineer specialist and in March 1998, was promoted to resident engineer. In September 2004, she was elevated to senior resident engineer, and in November 2005, she became assistant district engineer of construction in the Tucson District.

Recently, Olivares took on the challenge of educating children when she made an appearance at Career Day at Summit View Elementary School in Tucson. She used the opportunity to explain the role of a civil engineer in society and the path the young students would need to take to become

engineers. She gave each child a plastic ADOT safety helmet to wear; then, showing them architectural drawings and using a model construction site – complete with toy earthmovers and trucks – she allowed the children to experience and visualize the road construction process.

Someday, another civil engineer may be telling the story of how she or he became interested in the field, and will mention the day the lady with the nice laugh brought an earthmover to the classroom and explained how roads are built. 

*Ana Olivares, assistant district engineer for Tucson, educates aspiring engineers at Summit View Elementary School.*



# All is grand at 59th Avenue and Grand – Glendale project to open soon

By Matt Burdick

*Community Relations Director*

**G**rand Avenue in Historic Downtown Glendale will reopen in early July to complete a major modernization of one of the oldest thoroughfares in the Valley.

Nearly a mile section of Grand Avenue has been closed for more than a year while crews build the roadway below ground to pass beneath a unique crossing of Glendale and 59<sup>th</sup> avenues. The project was undertaken to eliminate a major traffic bottleneck and provide a striking new entrance to Glendale's historic downtown district with new pedestrian, transit and aesthetic features enhancing the intersection.

## Challenging project

Bob Winrow, resident engineer on the project for ADOT's Phoenix Construction District, says, "Building a new roadway through the historic downtown district in Glendale has been challenging. Discoveries of old utilities and sandy soil conditions pushed back the completion of early construction items and

resulted in rephrasing the intersection construction activities to keep the project on schedule."


Success is due in large part to effective collaborations. The project's location, sandwiched between the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway and Glendale City Hall, created the need for close coordination with the railroad and the City of Glendale.

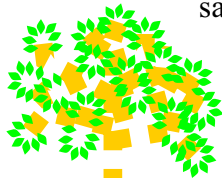
ADOT and the contractor's staff have worked to minimize construction impacts to Historic Downtown Glendale, and a comprehensive partnership between ADOT and the City of Glendale helped to keep businesses and the public informed about the project.

Environmental study impacts that estimated a \$4-million economic loss and the closure of 18-22 businesses due to customers avoiding the area have not been realized. In reality, Glendale reports that no businesses have closed due to the construction activity, and sales tax revenues were the same or slightly higher than before the project began.



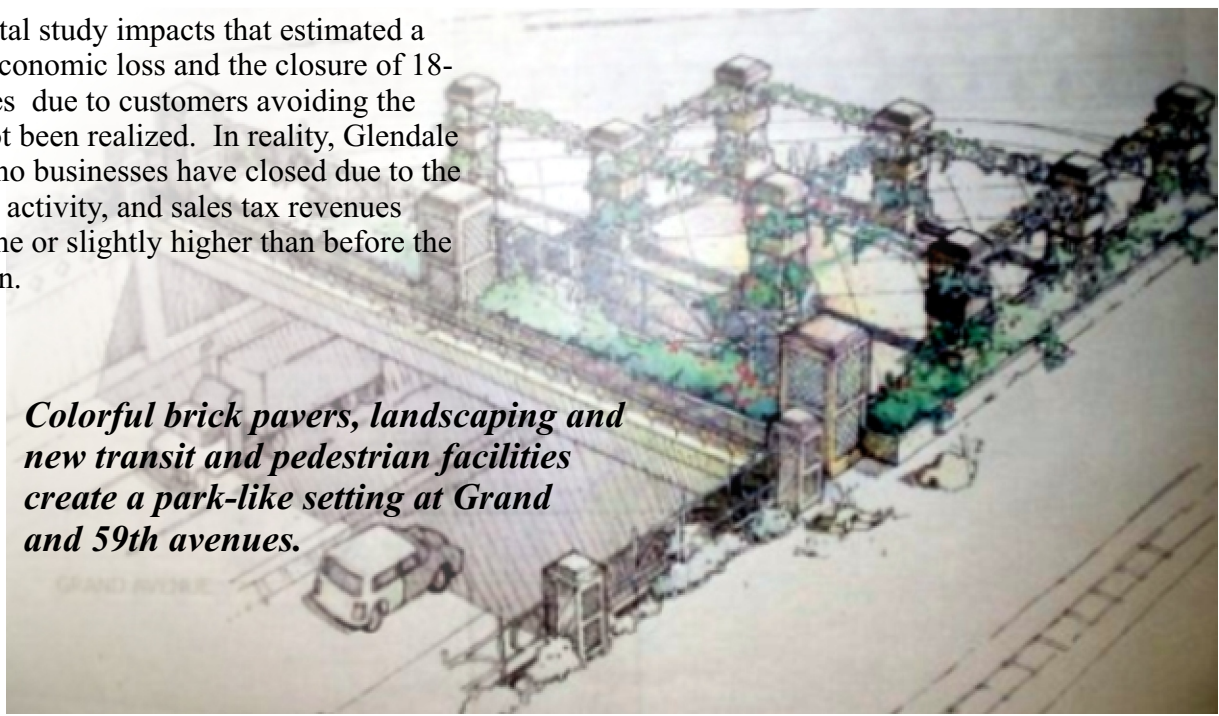
The \$26 million project marks the latest in a five-year effort to eliminate Grand Avenue's six-way intersections at several locations in Glendale, Peoria and Phoenix. When the project is completed, Myrtle Avenue and 57th Drive will serve as the primary connections between Grand Avenue and Historic Downtown Glendale.

Visit [www.grandimprovements.com](http://www.grandimprovements.com) for more information about the construction project. 



ALL PART OF THE  
**GRAND PLAN**

*Colorful brick pavers, landscaping and new transit and pedestrian facilities create a park-like setting at Grand and 59th avenues.*



## Reed Henry receives award for safety improvement program

**F**or his work on developing highway safety initiatives, Reed Henry, of ADOT's Traffic Engineering Group, received the *Lifesaver Agency Award* presented at the annual 'Making a Difference Together in Arizona' awards dinner at The Buttes – Marriott Resort in Tempe.



**Reed Henry**

Henry, who heads up the Highway Enhancements for Safety (HES) team based in Phoenix, was one of 35 individuals recognized at the event sponsored by the Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS), Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), and the National Highway


Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA). "The awards recognized achievements and sacrifices made by persons and organizations that made a difference in 2005 by making Arizona's roadways safer," said Richard Fimbres, director of GOHS.

His efforts in leading a team that developed the Highway Safety Improvement Program manual for ADOT in 2005 earned Reed the nomination. The program is a data-driven approach to improving highway safety. Henry also is known for submitting a successful grant application to

the Federal Highway Administration for an older-driver demonstration project, which is currently under construction in Sun City, Arizona. He also has served on the FHWA committee for research of low-cost safety improvements. Reed chaired the Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Committee's (GTSAC) subcommittee on Road Safety Audits and is in the process of implementing a plan to incorporate the Road Safety Audits for state highways and local municipalities.

He also was involved with the GTSAC subcommittees for photo enforcement and traffic records. Recently, Henry was appointed a member of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials subcommittee for highway safety management.

Nominating him for the award, ADOT Director Victor Mendez wrote about Henry, "He is committed to safer roads and has taken the Governor's Traffic Safety Council's recommendations to heart."

MADD National President Glynn Birch delivered the keynote speech to more than 250 in attendance. 



**The following employees attained milestones for their length of service with ADOT.**

### 35 years

Adelina Acevedo, ITD, State Engineer's Office

### 20 years

Paul T. Burch, ITD, Pavement Design

Timothy A. Dewey, TSG, Equipment Services

Jimmie L. Hansher, ITD, Statewide Acquisition

James C. Havins, ITD, Roadway Support

Judy Huckins, TSG, Training

Shukri A. Kattan, ITD, Phoenix Construction

Edward J. Pressley, ITD, Prescott Traffic Signal

Dale J. Steele, TPD, ATRC

Carmello G. Tellez, TSG, Equipment Services

Terry E. Vinson, ITD, Fredonia

Edward Zamora, TSG, Equipment Services

## Sarah Wuertz receives national honor for her work in employee recognition

**W**ith a limited budget but unlimited energy, Sarah is a true recognition hero.” So stated best-selling author Adrian Gostick, about ADOT’s Sarah Wuertz after she received the Pamela Sabin Recognition Award at the annual meeting of the National Association for Employee Recognition. Wuertz is the Awards and Recognition administrator for ADOT.



**Sarah Wuertz**

Gostick, who is co-author of *The 24-Carrot Manager*, commented, “Sarah’s passion for recognition is changing the Arizona Department of Transportation from a typical government-run bureaucratic organization into a more caring, responsive, customer-focused institution. She has

introduced on-the-spot recognition programs with a catchy, driving theme, has enhanced the department’s formal service awards, and has ensured that all managers are trained on recognition how-to’s. Sarah’s enthusiasm is so contagious that she is spreading her message to other agencies and has sponsored recognition training for state leaders.”

Wuertz has led ADOT’s Employee Recognition program for 12 years. “Recognition is a way that we can let employees know, early on, that ADOT is a place where your contributions are

valued, noticed and rewarded. It is a way for us to make employees think of ADOT as a place where they want to make a career,” Sarah said.

Trisha Polmear Lemon, instructional designer and facilitator for Arizona Government University, said of Wuertz, “She truly innovated service recognition at ADOT through her personal awareness of individual employee needs and preferences, as well as her attention to manager training as an important component to the program’s success.”

The Pamela Sabin Recognition Champion Award recognizes individuals who:

- Display leadership in taking the initiative to spread the message throughout their organization
- Exhibit passion in promoting the principles of recognition by addressing and/or overcoming obstacles
- Develop programs and/or initiatives that are an on-going commitment to recognition practices
- Demonstrate a commitment and serve as a role model for recognition practices in word and delivery.


The award was presented in Naples, Florida. 

## Sunset on the Santan to dedicate 12-mile segment of Santan Freeway

**S**unset on the Santan, an evening celebration to mark completion of the final 12-mile segment of the Santan Freeway (Loop 202) will be held Wednesday, June 7, from 6 to 9 p.m. The Town of Gilbert and City of Mesa are joining ADOT in sponsoring the event.

ADOT event coordinator Evonne Aldana notes that, as with all past freeway openings, citizens are encouraged to share in the free festivities, including music, entertainment, food and beverages. “Bring your bicycles, skateboards, rollerblades or other non-motorized vehicles and enjoy playing on the freeway before it opens to traffic,” invites Aldana. “Civic organizations, merchants and government agencies will have display booths, and thousands of people are expected for the event.”

“This is the longest stretch of freeway to open at one time since construction of the regional freeway system began 20 years ago,” according to Matt Burdick, ADOT’s community relations director. The pavement will be open to traffic on June 12.

With completion of this major segment of Loop 202 from Gilbert Road to Elliot Road, all 25 miles of the Santan Freeway from I-10 in Chandler to a connection with US 60 in Mesa will be open. 

## STATS

### Safety Talk and Tidbits

## Safety – it's for life

By Sonya Herrera

*Safety and Health Administrator*

**With June designated as National Safety Month, a time that has been set aside to focus on the importance of safety in every aspect of our lives, we introduce this new column. *STATS – Safety Talk and Tidbits* will cover topics ranging from safe handling of hazardous materials to improving ergonomics.**

These columns will originate from ADOT's Safety and Health Office to educate our employees in safe and healthful work practices. We believe that employees want to do the right thing; however, we have to define the what that is and train employees to that standard.

The Safety and Health Office provides leadership, policy development, training and consultation services that promote and support a safe and healthful work environment for our employees and contractors.

One of the newest resources that we offer is the Resource Center on our Web page, which can be found at <http://adotnet/divisions/ts/safety/About/resource.asp>. Here, supervisors and employees can find safety topics to use in their periodic safety meetings. This site also has *Frequently Asked Questions* on a variety of

topics such as workers compensation, hearing conservation, asbestos, and ergonomics. Our Web page is full of information that can help you improve safety in your work area.

We believe that developing a safety culture begins at an early age, so we encourage children related to ADOT employees to learn about safety. One of the events that we offer for children each year is an annual safety calendar art contest that gives children the opportunity to share their own safety message. We are beginning work on the 2007 Safety Calendar, so put your kids, grandchildren, nieces and nephews on notice that we will be soliciting artwork later this summer. The safety calendar has been well received, and we look forward to having even more participants this year.

Safety is about caring for each other, and nobody does that better than ADOT employees. Our employees often share success stories regarding how they saved lives, prevented injuries or made work areas safer. From time to time, we will share some of them with you. We always encourage reader contributions, so let us hear about your success stories or any safety and health issues you wish to discuss by sending an e-mail to: [safetyinfo@azdot.gov](mailto:safetyinfo@azdot.gov).



## Retirements from ADOT

**Employees retiring from ADOT recently, as reported by Human Resources include:**

Michael J. Barany, 6 years, ITD, Project Management

John G. Bruno, 17 years, TSG, Equipment Services Southern Region

Charles S. Clark, 11 years, ITD, Needle Mountain Maintenance

Billy J. Fletcher, 21 years, ITD, Payson Maintenance

Deborah A. Garrett, 30 years, TSG, Program Budget Analysis

David M. Gibson, 30 years, MVD, Traffic Records

Sidney G. Hathaway, 5 years, ITD, Project Management

David G. Maestas, 28 years, ITD, Phoenix Construction

Ginger A. Murdough, 34 years, CCP, Partnering

Jerry W Pfalzgraff, 20 years, ITD, Kingman Maintenance

Candace L. Randolph, 22 years, ITD, Maintenance Planning

Ronald C. Woolwine, 33 years ITD, Prescott Maintenance

## Public Transportation Division – providing safety oversight on the light rail project

**W**ith the Valley's light rail transit system in the early stages of construction, the Arizona Department of Transportation has been charged with providing oversight to ensure safe and secure operation of the system when it begins operating in 2008.

Scott Friedson, transportation planner for the Public Transportation Division, has been charged with developing and implementing the following criteria:

- Safety program standards
- Security program standards
- Hazard management
- Corrective action plans


- Safety audit reviews
- Reporting requirements
- Periodic on-site safety inspections

The Federal Transit Administration requires all of these, as outlined by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA).

Friedson is coordinating the safety oversight program in conjunction with Valley Metro Rail, Inc., the builders and operators of the light rail system.

“With the addition of Metro light rail on major streets, there will be programs emphasizing safe operations for cars and pedestrians,” Friedson says. “Our goal is to anticipate situations and develop plans to prevent or reduce unsafe acts. Through advanced planning and engineering, public education, and enforcement, we can eliminate a lot of potential hazards.”

Not only are Friedson and his associates concerned with interdiction of collisions between rail cars and vehicles, they also are focusing on passenger boarding and debarking safety. Boarding platforms are being engineered to ensure maximum safety. “We want to make the Metro commute as safe and pleasant as possible for riders,” he says.

Metro officials predict that with the opening of the \$1.3 billion rail system two years from now, ridership will amount to 26,000 passengers per day. By the year 2020, an estimated 50,000 riders will be utilizing the system. The start-up phase for light rail includes 20 miles of track, extending from 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Bethany Home Road through uptown and downtown Phoenix on Central Avenue, and then east to Tempe along Jefferson and Washington, through the ASU campus, and along Apache/Main into Mesa. 



*Scott Friedson, rail planner for ADOT's Public Transportation Division, checks out a segment of recently laid track in Tempe. This is only part of the initial 20 miles of light rail that, when completed, will provide mass transit in the Valley.*

### Media and Transportation Agency Summit

#### Advancing Traveler Communication

An interchange of ideas to  
improve communication  
between transportation agencies  
and the media  
to better serve the traveling public

June 9, 2006  
8:30 a.m. To 12 noon  
ADOT HRDC  
1130 N. 22nd Ave.  
Phoenix, Arizona

Sponsored by



# The government's business or the public's record?

By Cindy Eiserman  
*Deputy Risk Manager*

**At the Arizona Department of Transportation, we have an obligation to disclose copies of certain records to the public when requested. The Office of Risk Management has been appointed as custodian of public records and frequently receives requests for documents.**

Citizens are guaranteed the right to inspect and copy public records under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) of 1966. Arizona, which is considered one of the most open states with regard to the public's right to inspect records, enacted the Arizona Public Records law (A.R.S. 39-121 et seq) to further expand on the FOIA requirements.

## Exceptions to open records law

There are a couple of exceptions to the open records law: national security, on-going investigations and the best interest of the state. We do not release any documents that could threaten national security or the state's infrastructure. The second exception applies primarily to police agencies and the best interest of the state. This assertion to withhold records is made on a case-by-case basis by the Attorney General's Office. The Risk Management office relies on the AG's Transportation Section for advice on public record issues. This exception is rarely invoked by ADOT.

For national security reasons, bridge plans as they relate to identified critical structures are not

available for public inspection. Other records such as Social Security numbers, personal addresses and records of a sensitive nature are subject to redaction before copies of the records can be released.

The Arizona public records law requires that government documents be available for inspection at any time during normal office hours. However, this can be unreasonable and disruptive. So, fortunately, we do have the right to have the requester make an appointment and to put their request in writing. The requester needs to tell us the purpose of the request to determine if the documents will be used for a commercial or non-commercial purpose. Written requests are standard throughout federal government offices as well. The backlog for a FOIA request for some federal agencies is as long as two years. ADOT's average response time last year was 14 days.

In addition to Risk Management, other offices in ADOT are named custodian of records within their scope of business. These include the Motor Vehicle Division and Human Resources. The Communication and Community Partnerships Division is the custodian for all public relations or media matters. The Legislative Services staff is responsible for receiving inquiries from political figures.

At some time, you may be contacted by one of our staff members in our quest to find documents and information. The job of our staff is to find the most responsive answers. Your job as government employees with relation to public records is to have your records clear and manageable so when our office or another

custodian requests records, fulfillment of the request will proceed smoothly. Requests for information range from the simple to the complex. Some requesters want to inspect documents before they decide if they want copies. In such cases, an appointment is scheduled for the citizen to review the records, and someone from our office will sit with them during the review. When the requests are made in writing, our staff will contact the source of the records to assist us in locating the documents. We will ask that copies of the requested documents be sent to the Risk Management office, and we will then make the appropriate response to the requester.

## Costs for copies of records

Risk Management charges 25 cents per page and \$10 per hour for copies of public records. Reproduction costs associated with photos, videos and CDs are also billed to the requesting party. Some reports are charged a flat fee. Subpoenaed requests are 10 cents a page.

If you receive a call from a member of the public, an attorney, an investigator or even some engineers who are not working with ADOT, direct the requests to the Risk Management office. Questions from the news media should be referred to CCP.

Government records are open to the public, so take pride in the accountability. If you have questions or topic ideas concerning public records, please contact the Risk Management office. 